

Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

The rejection of claims 1–20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 (second para.) is respectfully traversed in view of the above amendments.

Claim 1 relates to containment/exclusion booms that include first and second support systems independently selected from the group consisting of (i) a floating support system comprising a plurality of flotation units, (ii) a permanent or semi-permanent structure comprising a plurality of pilings and one or more horizontal members spanning between adjacent pilings, and (iii) a combination consisting of (i) and (ii).

It is the position of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (“PTO”) that it is unclear “how a combination can be independently selected,” and if the combination can include additional means. With respect to the first issue, it is the first and second support systems—not the combination—that are “independently selected.” That is, the selection of whether the first support system is (i), (ii), or (iii) is independent of whether the second support system is (i), (ii), or (iii), and vice versa. As for the second issue, it is clear from the transitional language “consisting of” that the combination of (i) and (ii) does not include additional elements. Therefore, the indefiniteness rejection of claims 1–20 is improper and should be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 1, 8, 9, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 6,346,193 to Bauer (“Bauer”) is respectfully traversed in view of the above amendments.

Bauer teaches a boom system and its use at an inlet of a reservoir. The PTO’s position is that Bauer teaches first and second support systems, citing to several anchoring systems. Applicant respectfully disagrees. The anchoring systems of Bauer cannot be support systems according to claim 1 because the anchoring systems are not (i) a floating support system comprising a plurality of flotation units, (ii) a permanent or semi-permanent structure comprising a plurality of pilings and one or more horizontal members spanning between adjacent pilings, or (iii) a combination consisting of (i) and (ii), as required by claim 1 of the present invention. Because Bauer only teaches the use of a single support system, Bauer is deficient in two respects. First, Bauer fails to teach or suggest using a second support system connected to a distinct position on the boom curtain. Second, Bauer fails to teach or suggest using first *and second* support systems to “maintain at least one of the upper and lower curtain portions in a substantially sloped arrangement upon introduction of the

boom into the body of water.” Because Bauer fails to teach or suggest these claim elements, the rejection of claims 1, 8, 9, and 11 as anticipated by Bauer is improper and should be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 1–3, 6, 8, 9, 12, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) for anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 6,485,229 to Gunderson, III et al. (“Gunderson”) is respectfully traversed. Gunderson teaches a boom that contains a support system, curtain, anchoring system, and gas injection system, as well as various uses of such booms. The PTO has taken the position that Gunderson teaches first and second support systems, citing to the flotation billets as one and the anchoring system as another. Applicant respectfully disagrees. The anchoring system of Gunderson cannot be a support system according to claim 1 because the anchoring system is not (i) a floating support system comprising a plurality of flotation units, (ii) a permanent or semi-permanent structure comprising a plurality of pilings and one or more horizontal members spanning between adjacent pilings, or (iii) a combination consisting of (i) and (ii), as required by claim 1 of the present invention. Because Gunderson only teaches the use of a single support system, Gunderson is deficient in two respects. First, Gunderson fails to teach or suggest using a second support system connected to a distinct position on the boom curtain. Second, Gunderson fails to teach or suggest using first *and second* support systems to “maintain at least one of the upper and lower curtain portions in a substantially sloped arrangement upon introduction of the boom into the body of water.” Because Gunderson fails to teach or suggest either of these claim elements, the rejection of claims 1–3, 6, 8, 9, 12, and 13 as anticipated by Gunderson is improper and should be withdrawn.

The rejection of claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for obviousness over Bauer is respectfully traversed. Because Bauer is deficient with respect to the above-noted limitations of claim 1 and claim 15 depends from claim 1, applicant submits that Bauer cannot have rendered claim 15 obvious. For this reason, the rejection of claim 15 is improper and should be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 15, 16, 17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for obviousness over Bauer in view of Gunderson is respectfully traversed. The teachings of Bauer and Gunderson are set forth above. Because both Bauer and Gunderson are similarly deficient with respect to the above-noted limitations of claim 1, the combination of these references is likewise deficient with respect to claim 1. Because claims 15, 16, 17, and 19 depend from claim 1, the rejection of claims 15, 16, 17 and 19 is improper and should therefore be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 15-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for obviousness over Gunderson is respectfully traversed. The teachings of Gunderson are set forth above. Because Gunderson is deficient with respect to the above-noted limitations of claim 1 and claims 15-20 depend from claim 1, the rejection of claims 15-20 is improper and should therefore be withdrawn.

In view of all of the foregoing, applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Edwin V. Merkel
Registration No. 40,087


NIXON PEABODY LLP
Clinton Square, P.O. Box 31051
Rochester, New York 14603-1051
Telephone: (585) 263-1128
Facsimile: (585) 263-1600

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Ruth R. Smith